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Series

Theosophy Generally Stated

From the Official Report of the World's Parliment of Religions, Chicago, 1893

BY WILLIAM Q. JUDGE
Life President of the Theosophical Society

ADAPTED FOR ENQUIRERS

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There is no Religion Higher than Truth

The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, founded by H. P. Blavatsky in New York, 1875, continued after her death under the leadership of the co-founder, William Q. Judge, and now under the leadership of their successor, Katherine Tingley, has its International Headquarters at the World's Theosophical Center, Point Loma, California.

This organization is not in any way connected with, nor does it endorse any other societies using the name Theosophical.

Do Not Fail to Profit by the Following

It is a regrettable fact that many people use the name of Theosophy and our Organization for self-interest, using also the name of H. P. Blavatsky, the Foundress, to attract attention to themselves and to gain public support. This they do in private and public speech and in publications, also lecturing throughout the country. Without stating they are connected with the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society (see p. 17 of this pamphlet), they do nothing to contradict the fact, but in many cases permit it to be inferred that they are, thus misleading the public, and many honest enquirers are led away from the truths of Theosophy as presented by H. P. Blavatsky and her successors, W. Q. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and practically exemplified in the stupendous work for the uplifting of humanity throughout the world.

For information address F. M. Pierce, Secretary-General, Universal Brotherhood Headquarters, Point Loma, California; or the Secretary of the local lodge of the Universal Brotherhood.

THEOSOPHY GENERALLY STATED

THE claim is made that an impartial study of history, religion, and literature will show the existence from ancient times of a great body of philosophical, scientific and ethical doctrine forming the basis and origin of all similar thought in modern systems.

It is at once religious and scientific, asserting that religion and science should never be separated. It puts forward sublime religious and ideal teachings, but at the same time shows that all of it can be demonstrated to reason, and that authority other than that has no place, thus preventing the hypocrisy which arises from asserting dogmas on authority which no one can show as resting on reason.

This ancient body of doctrine is known as the "Wisdom Religion" and was always taught by adepts or initiates therein

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who preserve it through all time. Hence, and from other doctrines demonstrated, it is shown that man, being spirit and immortal, is able to perpetuate his real life and consciousness, and has done so during all time in the persons of those higher flowers of the human race who are members of an ancient and high brotherhood who concern themselves with the soul development of man, held by them to include every process of evolution on all planes.

The initiates, being bound by the law of evolution, must work with humanity as its development permits. Therefore, from time to time, they give out again and again, the same doctrine which from time to time grows obscure in various nations and places. This is the Wisdom Religion, and they are the keepers of it. At times they come to nations as great teachers and "saviours," who only repromulgate the old truths and system of ethics. This therefore holds, that humanity is capable of infinite perfection

both in time and quality, the saviours and adepts being held up as examples of that possibility.

From this living and presently acting body of perfected men H. P. Blavatsky declared she received the impulse to once more bring forward the old ideas, and from them also received several keys to ancient and modern doctrines that had been lost during modern struggles toward civilization, and also that she was furnished by them with some doctrines really ancient but entirely new to the present day in any exoteric shape. These she wrote among the other keys furnished by her to her fellow members and the world at large. Added, then, to the testimony through all time found in records of all nations, we have this modern explicit assertion that the ancient learned and humanitarian body of adepts still exists on this earth and takes an interest in the development of the race.

Theosophy postulates an eternal principle called the unknown, which can never

be cognized except through its manifestations. This eternal principle is in and is every thing and being; it periodically and eternally manifests itself and recedes again from manifestation. In this ebb and flow evolution proceeds and itself is the progress of the manifestation. The perceived universe is the manifestation of this unknown, including spirit and matter, for Theosophy holds that those are but the two opposite poles of the one unknown principle. They co-exist, are not separate nor separable from each other, or, as the Hindu scriptures say, there is no particle of matter without spirit, and no particle of spirit without matter.

In manifesting itself the spirit-matter differentiates on seven planes, each more dense on the way down to the plane of our senses than its predecessor, the substance in all being the same, only differing in degree. Therefore from this view the whole universe is alive, not one atom of it being in any sense dead. It

is also conscious and intelligent, its consciousness and intelligence being present on all planes though obscured on this one.

On this plane of ours the spirit focalizes itself in all human beings who choose to permit it to do so, and the refusal to permit it is the cause of ignorance, of sin, of all sorrow and suffering. In all ages some have come to this high state, have grown to be as gods, are partakers actively in the work of nature, and go on from century to century widening their consciousness and increasing the scope of their government in nature. This is the destiny of all beings, and hence at the outset Theosophy postulates the perfectibility of the race, removes the idea of innate unregenerable wickedness, and offers a purpose and an aim for life which is consonant with the longings of the soul and with its real nature, tending at the same time to destroy pessimism with its companion, despair.

In Theosophy the world is held to be

the product of the evolution of the principle spoken of from the very lowest first forms of life, guided as it proceeded by intelligent perfected beings from other and older evolutions, and compounded also of the egos or individual spirits for and by whom it emanates. Hence man as we know him is held to be a conscious spirit, the flower of evolution, with other and lower classes of egos below him in the lower kingdoms, all, however, coming up and destined one day to be on the same human stage as we now are, we then being higher still. Man's consciousness being thus more perfect is able to pass from one to another of the planes of differentiation mentioned. If he mistakes any one of them for the reality that he is in his essence, he is deluded; the object of evolution, then, is to give him complete self-consciousness so that he may go on to higher stages in the progress of the universe. His evolution after coming on the human stage is for the getting of experience, and in order

to so raise up and purify the various planes of matter with which he has to do, that the voice of the spirit may be fully heard and comprehended.

He is a religious being because he is a spirit encased in matter, which is in turn itself spiritual in essence. Being a spirit he requires vehicles with which to come in touch with all the planes of nature included in evolution, and it is these vehicles that make of him an intricate, composite being, liable to error, but at the same time able to rise above all delusions and conquer the highest place. He is in miniature the universe, for he is a spirit, manifesting himself to himself by means of seven differentiations. Therefore he is known in Theosophy as a sevenfold being.

The Christian division of body, soul, and spirit is accurate so far as it goes, but it will not answer to the problems of life and nature, unless, as is not the case, those three divisions are each held to be composed of others, which would raise

the possible total to seven. The spirit stands alone at the top; next comes the spiritual soul or Buddhi as it is called in Sanskrit. This partakes more of the spirit than any below it, and is connected with Manas or mind, these three being the real trinity of man, the imperishable part, the real thinking entity living on the earth in the other and denser vehicles by its evolution.

Below, in order of quality, is the plane of the desires and passions shared with the animal kingdom, unintelligent, and the producer of ignorance flowing from delusion. It is distinct from the will and judgment, and must therefore be given its own place. On this plane is gross life, manifesting, not as spirit from which it derives its essence, but as energy and motion on this plane. It being common to the whole objective plane and being everywhere, is also to be classed by itself, the portion used by man being given up at the death of the body. Then, last, before the objective body, is the model

or double of the outer or physical case. This double is the astral body belonging to the astral plane of matter, not so dense as physical molecules, but more tenuous and much stronger, as well as lasting. It is the original of the body, permitting the physical molecules to arrange and show themselves thereon, allowing them to go and come from day to day as they are known to do, yet ever retaining the fixed shape and contour given by the astral double within.

These lower four principles or sheaths are the transitory perishable part of man, not himself, but in every sense the instrument he uses, given up at the hour of death like an old garment, and rebuilt out of the general reservoir at every new birth. The trinity is the real man, the thinker, the individuality that passes from house to house, gaining experience at each rebirth, while it suffers and enjoys according to its deeds—it is the one central man, the living spirit-soul.

Now this spiritual man, having always existed, being intimately concerned in

evolution, dominated by the law of cause and effect, because in himself he is that very law, showing moreover on this plane varieties of force of character, capacity, and opportunity, his very presence must be explained while the differences noted have to be accounted for.

The doctrine of reincarnation does all this. It means that man as a thinker, composed of soul, mind and spirit, occupies body after body in life after life on the earth, which is the scene of his evolution, and where he must, under the very laws of his being, complete that evolution, once it has been begun. In any one life he is known to others as a personality, but in the whole stretch of eternity he is one individual, feeling in himself an identity not dependent on name, form, or recollection.

This doctrine is the very base of Theosophy, for it explains life and nature. It is one aspect of evolution, for as it is re-embodiment in meaning, and as evolution could not go on without re-embodiment, it

is evolution itself, as applied to the human soul. But it is also a doctrine believed in at the time given to Jesus and taught in the early ages of Christianity, being now as much necessary to that religion as it is to any other to explain texts, to reconcile the justice of God with the rough and merciless aspect of nature and life to most mortals, and to throw a light perceptible by reason on all the problems that vex us in our journey through this world.

The vast, and under any other doctrine unjust, difference between the savage and the civilized man as to both capacity, character, and opportunity can be understood only through this doctrine, and coming to our own stratum the differences of the same kind may only thus be explained. It vindicates Nature and God, and removes from religion the blot thrown by men who have postulated creeds which paint the Creator as a demon.

Each man's life and character are the outcome of his previous lives and thoughts. Each is his own judge, his own execution-

er, for it is his own hand that forges the weapon which works for his punishment, and each by his own life reaches reward, rises to heights of knowledge and power for the good of all who may be left behind him. Nothing is left to chance, favor, or partiality, but all is under the governance of law.

Man is a thinker, and by his thoughts he makes the causes for woe or bliss; for his thoughts produce his acts. He is the centre for any disturbance of the universal harmony, and to him as the centre the disturbance must return so as to bring about equilibrium, for Nature always works toward harmony. Man is always carrying on a series of thoughts, which extend back to the remote past, continually making action and reaction. He is thus responsible for all his thoughts and acts, and in that his complete responsibility is established; his own spirit is the essence of this law and provides forever compensation for every disturbance and adjustment for all effects.

This is the law of Karma or justice, sometimes called the ethical law of causation. It is not foreign to the Christian scriptures, for both Jesus and St. Paul clearly enunciated it. Jesus said we should be judged as we gave judgment and should receive the measure we meted to others. St. Paul said: "Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap." And that sowing and reaping can only be possible under the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation.

But what of death and after? Is heaven a place or is it not? Theosophy teaches, as may be found in all sacred books, that after death the soul reaps a rest. This is from its own nature. It is a thinker, and cannot during life fulfill and carry out all nor even a small part of the myriads of thoughts entertained. Hence, when at death it casts off the body and the astral body, and is released from the passions and desires, its natural forces have immediate sway and it thinks its thoughts out

on the soul plane, clothed in a finer body suitable to that existence.

This is called Devachan. It is the very state that has brought about the descriptions of heaven common to all religions, but this doctrine is very clearly put in the Buddhist and Hindoo religions. It is a time of rest, because the physical body being absent the consciousness is not in the completer touch with visible nature which is possible on the material plane.

But it is a real existence, and no more illusionary than earth life; it is where the essence of the thoughts of life that were as high as character permitted, expands and is garnered by the soul and mind. When the force of these thoughts is fully exhausted the soul is drawn back once more to earth, to that environment which is sufficiently like unto itself to give it the proper further evolution. This alternation from state to state goes on until the being rises from repeated experiences above ignorance, and realizes in itself the actual unity of all spiritual beings. Then

it passes on to higher and greater steps on the evolutionary road.

No new ethics are presented by Theosophy, as it is held that right ethics are forever the same. But in the doctrines of Theosophy are to be found the philosophical and reasonable basis for ethics and the natural enforcement of them in practice. Universal Brotherhood is that which will result in doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, and in your loving your neighbor as yourself—declared as right by all teachers in the great religions of the world.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

The Universal Brotherhood

Established for the Benefit of the People of the Earth and all Creatures

Objects

The BROTHERHOOD is a part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact. Its principal purpose is to teach brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature and make it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religion, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man.

* * *

The Universal Brotherhood welcomes to membership all who truly love their fellow men and desire the eradication of the evils caused by the barriers of race, creed, caste or color, which have so long impeded human progress; to all sincere lovers of truth and to all who aspire to higher and better things than the mere pleasures and interests of worldly life, and are prepared to do all in their power to make Brotherhood a living power in the life of humanity, its various departments offer unlimited opportunities.

The whole work of the Organization is under the direction of the Leader and Official Head, Katherine Tingley, as outlined in the Constitution.

For further information address,

F. M. PIERCE,
Secretary-General, Universal Brotherhood
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The Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was founded by H. P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge and others, in New York in 1875. It was re-organized in April, 1895, by Wm. Q. Judge, under the name of the Theosophical Society in America, and in February, 1898, it became an integral part of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD ORGANIZATION.

Its principal purpose is to publish and disseminate literature relating to Theosophy, Brotherhood, ancient, and modern religions, philosophies, sciences and arts.

The International Brotherhood League

Founded in 1897 by Katherine Tingley

Objects

1. To help men and women to realize the nobility of their calling and their true position in life.
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3. To ameliorate the condition of unfortunate women, and assist them to a higher life.
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6. To bring about a better understanding between so-called savage and civilized races, by promoting a closer and more sympathetic relationship between them.
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